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Redevelopment Board Minutes 03/09/2009

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Minutes of March 9, 2009

Members Present: Andrew West, Chair
Christopher Loreti, Vice Chair
Ed Tsoi
Roly Chaput
Bruce Fitzsimmons

Also Present: Kevin J. O'Brien
David Berry
Laura Wiener
Joey Glushko

Chairmen Andy West called the meeting to order at 7:00 and announced the continuation of the public hearing on the application for special permit to construct a CVS drug store with a drive-thru pharmacy at the site of the former Hodgden Noyes automobile dealership at 821-837 Massachusetts Avenue. He then asked Kevin O'Brien to summarize the status of the application before the Board. Kevin O'Brien read a list of 18 items that he thought were still unresolved.

Andy West asked Mary Winstanley O'Connor who represents both the Noyes Family and CVS if she wanted to include the residential use of the Atwood House in the special permit. She responded that the Noyes family had not made an agreement with the Housing Corporation of Arlington and did not wish to include the residential use in the permit at this time. Andy West then asked if they might consider including space for an addition to the Atwood House in the permit. Mary Winstanley O'Connor replied that they might consider that.

Andy West then asked the applicant to explain any changes that had been made to the site plan. Phil Henry of R.J. O'Connell Associates described the site plan indicating that they had a 22 foot wide traffic aisle in the parking lot. They had tried to utilize angle parking, but lost too many parking spaces. He continued, saying that the plan did achieve the 8% required landscaped space within the parking lot. Mary Winstanley O'Connor indicated that Charles Skidmore, principal of the high school requested that there be a fence along the property line where it abuts the high school. Charles Skidmore, in the audience, confirmed her statement.

Andy West then asked to move on to discussion of traffic issues. He referred to the comment in the GEOD email dated March 4, 2009 saying the distance between the two curb cut openings is acceptable and safe, and asked representatives of the Transportation Advisory Committee to respond. Jeff Maxtutis and Ed Starr showed pictures of the site showing the pedestrian traffic and referencing the plan showing the CVS driveway closer to Carey Drive, Andy West noted that the centerline distance between the two is about 90 feet, while the curb-to-curb distance is about 63 feet.

Ed Starr (TAC) distributed and explained traffic data (vehicles, pedestrians, accidents). Jeff Maxtutis (TAC) then presented photographs of Mass. Ave. in front of the site, showing cars queuing back to the site from the pedestrian light on the other side of Carey Drive; and pedestrian congestion in the same area. The photos were taken a little after 8 a.m. Ed Starr noted that the distance between the two drives is too close, that the goal should be to maximize separation up to the recommended 100 feet curb-to-curb.

Andy West noted that the pedestrian light will remain, and a new non-signalized crosswalk might be added between it and the site, near Carey Drive, providing a legal crossing for those currently jaywalking.

Chris Emilius (GEOD) emphasized that the slowest period for CVS is from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., and thus there is very little overlap with peak traffic. Paul Beck (GBC) noted that the peak time for CVS is typically between 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, and about noon on Saturdays. Chris Loreti asked the high school principal what the school hours are. He responded that everyone should be in class by 8 a.m.

Andy West asked Ed Starr how the morning peak traffic compared to the afternoon peak traffic. Ed Starr responded that the afternoon peak is about half of the morning peak. Chris Emilius said that the data presented by TAC is well below average, that less than 2 vehicles per minute is not a lot. He added that TAC's numbers are the same as those presented by GEOD in its reports, all of which have been available and known for two months. Ed Starr responded that the point is that there are a lot of conflicts in this area already, and CVS will add to this conflict. Sam Offei-Addo (BSC), citing the 18 accidents in this area, agreed with Ed Starr, adding that the two drives should be separated as much as possible, and bumpouts should be added.

Andy West, distributed a sketch showing the CVS drive next to the building with no loss of parking, and asked if the CVS driveway could be moved as shown. Phil Henry (RJO) responded that it could not be moved because parking spaces would be lost in order to provide a route to allow the delivery truck to turn right around the back corner of the building; and that there would be an unsafe backup of vehicles at the handicap space and where pedestrians accessed the building. Paul Beck added that this driveway location would create another unsafe condition: vehicles from Mass. Ave. turning immediately into a bottleneck.

Chris Emilius noted that the recommended 100-foot separation between drives applies when both drives are two-way. He suggested that adding a bumpout from Carey Drive to the CVS driveway might help reduce conflicts. Bruce Fitzsimmons asked if bumpouts should be on both sides of the road. Chris Emilius said there probably should be bumpouts on both sides. Bruce Fitzsimmons asked about using contrasting material on the crosswalks. Both Chris Emilius and Sam Offei-Addo responded that different material is not recommended, due to problems with plowing and maintenance, but perhaps contrasting paint might be used.

Mary Winstanley O'Connor (KOI) emphasized that the high school peak period ends at 8 a.m., well before the CVS peak. Phil Henry said that since the comments at the last meeting, they had put their best plan forward. Jeff Maxtutis replied that he wanted the safest entrance and therefore more separation between the drives. Chris Loreti asked about moving the bus stop to the west side of Newman way. All the traffic people thought that was not a good idea. Charles Skidmore asked if CVAS would pay for a crossing guard, but the applicant did not respond.

Bruce Fitzsimmons asked about the 22 foot wide aisle where 24 feet is required and said he was concerned about the placement of wheel stops. Phil Henry responded that they would move the wheel stops so the full length of the parking space could be used. Thereafter there was discussion about moving and narrowing the parking island and narrowing the buffer where it exceeded 7.5 feet to achieve the full 24 foot aisle width. Sam Offei-Addo pointed out that the 24 foot width was essential, not an option. He also indicated that there needed to be a pedestrian pathway to get from the store into the parking lot without going through a parking.

Bruce Fitzsimmons then brought up the pylon sign that appears on the new plans, but Andy West asked that they talk about signs later.

Andy West said he is still concerned about the small separation between the entrance and Carey Drive. Mary Winstanley O'Connor said that CVS is agreeable to constructing bumpouts for the crosswalk near Carey Drive and the one near Bartlett Street. Andy West asked about mitigation of the traffic impacts at Mass. Ave. and Mill St. Mary Winstanley O'Connor replied that CVS would contribute \$5,000 to the design of improvements to the intersection.

Andy West asked that they move on to landscaping. Phil Henry said that they now achieved the required 8% of landscaped space within the parking lot and showed the spaces that he counted. Chris Loreti asked if the landscaping shown near the Atwood House would hide the dumpsters from the street. Phil Henry said they would adjust the heights of the plantings to do so. Roland Chaput discussed the plantings shown on the plan asking them not to use Colorado Blue Spruce near the entrance. He preferred that they use only native plants, and eliminate the grass shown in the buffer strip and replace it with mulch.

Andy West asked if they could move the transformer from the left landscaped island to the right side island which doesn't show from the street. Phil Henry replied that he would see if he could do that. Andy West then said he wanted to see a walkway into the parking lot as Sam Offei-Addo had recommended. Phil Henry agreed to remove some landscaping to make a pathway and make other adjustments to do so.

Andy West then asked that they adjust the parking behind the Atwood House in order to accommodate a possible addition. They agreed to move the parking back to be almost in line with the rear of the store. Chris Loreti asked if they could use recycled stormwater for irrigation of the site. Andy West asked that they look into more use of permeable paving materials in the parking lot area and asked that they report back their findings to the board even if they can not use them. CVS indicated that they would investigate the use and report back to the Board.

Andy West then asked Kevin O'Brien to summarize the Town Engineer's comments about stormwater. Kevin O'Brien did so and Phil Henry described how the system worked and explained that the hydro-dynamic separator originally proposed did not work as well as claimed and therefore they substituted a separator that works as claimed and would avoid permit problems with DEP. The new separator is not as effective as the first one claimed to be. Chris Loreti asked if the Town Engineer compared the system to EDR standard no. 5. Kevin O'Brien read the Town Engineer's comment that the system met the standard.

Andy West next suggested that they talk about the architecture of the building now that there were new elevations before the Board. The applicant's architect, Kevin Patton, presented the new plans showing the changes from the old plans. He said all HVAC equipment which is about 5 feet high would be in the lower level roof surrounded by slanted roof on the edges of the building that were all at least 7 feet high. He showed the Board samples of the clapboard and the brick that would be used. Andy West thought the drive-thru canopy was too high. Kevin Patton explained that it was high so that delivery truck wouldn't hit it. Ed Tsoi suggested removing the slanted roof and make it a flat roof. It was agreed to do so, Chris Loreti asked what the Board thought of the dormers on the west side of the building. It was agreed to remove them. Andy West and Ed Tsoi discussed changing the right front corner and it was decided and agreed to instead make the center of the left side clapboard not brick.

Chris Loreti asked if the Mass. Ave. windows were blocked. Kevin Patton replied that they were blocked up to six feet and open above that.

Andy West then asked that Kevin O'Brien go through the issue list to see what remained to be decided. Kevin went through the list,

1. Use of Atwood House: will not make part of this permit unless agreement to do otherwise is reached before end of this process; otherwise will come back to amend this permit.
2. moving vehicle entrance to the right hand parking bay: unresolved.
3. construction of bump-outs at x-walk at Carey Drive and at Bartlett St.: CVS agrees to construct them.
4. contribution to the mitigation of traffic impacts at Mass. Ave. / Mill St.: CVS agrees to pay \$5,000 toward design of mitigation measures.
5. restriction of on-street parking to assure adequate sight lines: bumpouts should accomplish this goal.
6. proper on-site signage to guide traffic (drive-thru, deliveries, etc): CVS will submit detailed sign plan.
7. 22 foot aisle width in parking lot: will re-design lot to make aisle 24 feet wide.
8. reduction in buffer, west side of site: Buffer will be reduced to no less than 7.5 feet and include a fence.
9. requirement of 8% landscaped space in parking lot: plan will include 8%.
10. documentation of landscaped space in parking lot: plan will document the areas counted.
11. location of bicycle parking : shown on most recent plan.
12. removal of total suspended solids in stormwater: provided explanation and technically meets standards, will look at removing more suspended solids.
13. route of stormwater from site to Mill Brook: will be surface flow and of similar quantity as now – no change.
14. detailed sign plan: will submit detailed sign plan
15. screening of dumpsters from Atwood House and street: cedar stockade fencing will surround dumpsters and landscaping between them and street will be adjusted to block view.
16. placement and screening(?) of HVAC equipment: will be hidden by slanted roofs surrounding placement in middle flat roof, details in 50% plans.
17. detailed lighting plan (appearance from off-site): detailed plan will be provided
18. high level of lighting adjacent to Atwood House: unnecessary soffit lighting will be removed on house side.
19. do more to increase LEED score: will look in to more use of permeable pavers and use of stormwater for irrigation.

Bruce Fitzsimmons pointed out that this zoning district permits a wall sign that is no more than 40 square feet in area and Kevin O'Brien asked if they really were proposing a pylon sign. Paul Beck responded that they would have their sign consultant make a recommendation at the next meeting.

The applicant acknowledged that they would submit more information and requested the hearing be continued until they had time to produce that material. Chris Loreti then moved that the hearing be continued until 7 pm on March 30, 2009 to be held in the second floor conference room of the Town Hall Annex. Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

The Board members discussed their upcoming schedule for a short while and do to the lateness of the hour opted to postpone the review of minutes until the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin J. O'Brien

Approved 3/16/09